



The issue:

MILITARY

Qualified, patriotic service members can still be fired, just for being gay.



damn facts

More than 66,000 gay, lesbian and bisexual people are serving in the military.¹¹

Three out of 4 Americans say openly gay citizens should be able to serve in the military.¹²

The Pentagon has spent up to \$1.2 billion of U.S. taxpayer money to uphold “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.”¹³

Thirty-five countries allow open military service by their gay citizens.¹⁴

More than 70% of service members say repealing “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” will have a positive, mixed or no effect on their units’ ability to work together.¹⁵

a project of



The Price of Service: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE MILITARY!

There are more than 66,000 gay, lesbian and bisexual service members in the military, and 1 million gay veterans in the U.S.¹ Under the 1993 law known as “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell, Don’t Pursue, Don’t Harass” (“Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”), however, being openly gay, lesbian or bisexual is cause for discharge from the military.

More than 14,000 gay members of the military have been dismissed from duty since “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” was first enacted.²

On Dec. 15, 2010, the U.S. House of Representatives passed, by a vote of 250–175, a standalone bill to repeal “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” On December 18, after previously failed attempts to bring other repeal legislation to the floor for a vote, the U.S. Senate finally passed the House’s standalone repeal bill, 65–31.

On Dec. 22, 2010, President Obama signed the bill into law, beginning the first steps to repealing the 17-year-old discriminatory law.

WHAT WE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE PENTAGON REPORT!

In February 2010, Defense Secretary Gates commissioned the Department of Defense to study the potential effects of repeal. The Pentagon Comprehensive Review Working Group’s report issued its findings on Nov. 30, 2010, declaring, “The risk of repeal of ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ to overall military effectiveness is low.”³ Other relevant findings:

- More than 70% of service members reported that repealing “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” will have a positive, mixed or no effect on their units’ ability to work together.⁴
- Up to 80% of troops reported having already served with someone they believed to be gay or lesbian.⁵
- A majority of service members in the Marine Corps and combat specialty units expressed concern about repeal—but 89% of army and 84% of marine combat arms units who had already served alongside gay troops reported positive, mixed or no effect on unit cohesion.⁶

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT FOR ‘DON’T ASK, DON’T TELL’!

Two things must happen before “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” is finally dismantled:

Certification. Under this process, the President, Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff must certify that they have considered the recommendations outlined in the Pentagon Working Group Report; that the Department of Defense has prepared the necessary policies and regulations for repeal; and that implementing those policies for repeal are consistent with the military standards for readiness, military effectiveness, unit cohesion, and recruiting and retention.⁷ The



www.hrc.org

The Human Rights Campaign is the nation's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender civil rights organization.



www.sldn.org

Servicemembers Legal Defense Network is dedicated to ending discrimination against and harassment of military personnel affected by "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

President's written certification must be delivered to the congressional armed services committees.

60-day period. Once certification is received by the armed services committees, there is a mandatory 60-day period before "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" is finally repealed.

WHY WE SHOULD STILL GIVE A DAMN!

Even though repeal is underway, we *cannot* stop giving a damn. Here's why:

Service members are still at risk of being fired. In just 1 month after the repeal bill was signed into law, more than 135 service members contacted our damn partners for help.⁸ That's because until "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" is fully repealed, troops are still at risk of being fired, simply for who they are.

The timeline is unknown. While both President Obama and Defense Secretary Gates have publicly stated their intention to ensure certification is completed quickly,⁹ there is actually no set timeline for the certification process.

There's no guarantee of equal treatment. The U.S. military has operated under "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" for

17 years. Repeal cannot automatically erase nearly 2 decades of the mindset shaped by this discriminatory law. There is no guarantee that gay service members will receive fair and equal treatment, get equal opportunities for promotion and receive similar benefits.

Transgender service members aren't covered. The repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" will not remove the prohibition on allowing transgender people from serving in the military.¹⁰

NEED A COMMON STANDARD!

The government needs to expedite the certification process and abolish "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" for good.

It's time for our military to do what so many other countries have already done: Allow open service and equal treatment, where everyone is held accountable to a common standard of conduct.

It's time for things to change.

WE GIVE A DAMN. DO YOU?

I GIVE A DAMN ABOUT THE MILITARY! Now What?

- **JOIN THE GIVE A DAMN CAMPAIGN:** The Give A Damn Campaign is for everybody who cares about gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender equality, especially all you straight people out there!
 - Register now at www.wegiveadamn.org
- **GET INFORMED:** Learn more about the issues.
 - Watch a Damn Video or read people's Personal Stories
 - Check out our Damn Blog, which is updated daily
- **GET INVOLVED:** Spread the word about equality to family and friends!
 - Share a Damn Video or tell us your Personal Story
 - Forward this PDF
- **VISIT OUR NON-PROFIT PARTNERS' WEBSITES**
 - Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN): www.sldn.org
 - Human Rights Campaign: www.hrc.org

www.wegiveadamn.org

1-2 Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN). "A Guide to 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell.'" www.sldn.org

3-5 U.S. Department of Defense. "Report of the Comprehensive Review of the Issues Associated with a Repeal of 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell.'" Nov. 30, 2010. www.defense.gov/home/features/2010/0610_gates-dadt/DADTRReport_FINAL_20101130%28secure-hires%29.pdf

6 Human Rights Campaign (HRC). "Pathway to Final Repeal." www.hrc.org

7 SLDN. "Next Steps for 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' Repeal." www.sldn.org. HRC. "U.S. Senate Votes to End 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell.'" Dec. 18, 2010. www.hrc.org. Also see 6.

8 SLDN. "Open Letter: Army Vet Aubrey Sarvis to Service Members, LGBT Community and Allies," Jan. 12, 2011. www.sldn.org

9 At the Dec. 22, 2010, bill-signing ceremony, President Obama said, "We are not going to be dragging our feet to get this done." Defense Secretary Gates reported on Jan. 6, 2011, that he had instructed the Department of Defense to accelerate their repeal preparation efforts so as to expedite the certification process. See 8.

10 See 8.

11-13 See 1-2.

14-15 See 3-5.